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General and complete disarmament: small arms

Letter dated 14 September 1999 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the European Union and Canada, we have the honour to draw your attention to the European Union-Canada statement on the European Union-Canada common approach to combat the spread and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons, issued at the meeting of Foreign Ministers, held in Helsinki on 2 September 1999.

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Robert R. **Fowler**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Canada to
the United Nations

(*Signed*) Marjatta **Rasi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Finland to
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Annex

[Original: English and French]

European Union-Canada statement, issued at the meeting of Foreign Ministers, held in Helsinki on 2 September 1999

European Union-Canada common approach to combat the spread and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons

Further to the joint statement on small arms and anti-personnel mines issued on 17 December 1998, the European Union and Canada are taking a common approach to tackling the problem posed by the excessive and uncontrolled accumulation and spread of small arms. This common approach — both preventive and reactive — is comprised of multiple and coordinated international, regional and national efforts that contribute to sustainable peace in areas prone or affected by conflict.

The European Union and Canada welcome the decision of the General Assembly to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, to be held no later than 2001. The European Union and Canada are of the view that this conference must take a comprehensive approach to the problem by considering each of the elements of the common approach. To this end, they will consult on the responses to the Secretary-General's call for the views of Member States as to the date, venue, scope and objectives of and preparatory work for the international conference. In this context, the European Union welcomes and supports Canada's offer to host a preparatory committee in the run-up to the international conference. Both sides underscore the importance of continued work to elaborate a protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and other related materials, supplementary to the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime.

Canada shares the objectives of the European Union Joint Action on Small Arms, adopted on 17 December 1998. Canada notes with approval that the Joint Action manifests their common approach and accordingly endorses its principles. The European Union and Canada seek to further improve their cooperation in advocating the adoption, by other States and in other forums, of the European Union-Canada common approach to dealing with the problem of small arms.